

**BRITISH AIR CONTROL:**

**A MODEL FOR THE APPLICATION OF AIR  
POWER IN LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT?**

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The doctrinal inertia resulting from 40 years of preparing for war with the Soviet Union, combined with several "lessons learned" from the air campaign in Operation Desert Storm, has led some air power advocates to overstate the role of air power in future military contests. Belief in the "primacy of air power" creates an intellectual environment in which an air doctrine similar to that employed by the British to administer its colonies during the interwar years (1918-39) might prove appealing as a means to solve future conflicts, especially those categorized as low-intensity conflict (LIC).

However similar the domestic and geostrategic positions of a post-World War I Britain and a post-cold war United States, the military objectives of British colonial rule were much different from those appropriate for the successful resolution of modern low-intensity conflicts. Employing air power in a manner similar to how it was used in British colonies and mandates, known as *air control*, is unsuitable as a means to bring about lasting solutions in today's low-intensity environment because this method ignores the sociopolitical nature of LIC.

This article begins with a description of air control in the context of its development. It explores three examples of British application of the concept: Somaliland, Mesopotamia, and Aden. It then discusses the forces that drive current American thinking about air power, emphasizing how air control appeals to those who subscribe to traditional views of air power application. Next, the article examines the Clinton administration's proposal for

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the application of air power in Bosnia in order to demonstrate how it mirrors the concept of air control. It then challenges the notion that air control, or any similar application of air power, is appropriate for the low-intensity environment.

### **Origins of Air Control Doctrine**

After World War I, Britain set about the task of disarmament. The "war to end all wars" had just been won and the demon of militarism had been exorcised for good. It was time for British lawmakers to confront domestic economic problems: the balance of payments, labor unrest, and unemployment.

The British Empire was seen as a large part of the solution to Britain's financial problems. Her colonies were as much a source of cheap raw materials as an outlet for much-needed foreign trade. During the war, Britain expanded the size of its empire to some 13 million square miles and 450 million "souls" on six continents.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the British capacity to govern colonial holdings had been ravaged by four years of war.

To maintain control, Britain would rely on a concept of domination that employed "power" rather than brute force. According to British historian Anthony Clayton:

Power, then, with the minimum actual use of force, was to be the keynote [of colonial rule]. Such power would by charisma produce the correct response from colonial peoples, who would choose to obey the orders of the system rather than be forced into so doing. As such, power was economical, since the use of raw force quickly led to its attrition. Further, force used in one place could not simultaneously be used elsewhere, while the weight of power could be felt in many places at once.<sup>2</sup>

The foundation of this concept of power lay on historical precedent as well as on the continued perception that Britain could and would deliver punishment to those who opposed its will. Clayton asserts that this doctrine was practicable only because of the great advances in military technology that occurred during World War I:

It seems certain that large areas of the Empire would have had to be abandoned had it not been for the new concepts of control "without occupation," based chiefly on the use of aircraft, armoured-cars, wireless and motor vehicles.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Britain began the interwar period with a strategy of colonial administration based on the deterrent effect of rapid worldwide force projection.

However, reliance on the threat of military might to administer the colonies was overshadowed by the desire to cut government outlays. Another significant instrument for the task of improving Britain's fiscal soundness was the reduction of defense expenditures. Not only did shrinking the armed forces reflect the current trend of rejecting militarism, it was also a means to "balance the books." A formal policy of reducing military costs, termed the *Ten-Year Rule*, was published in late 1919. It was based on the presumption that Britain would not be engaged in a major war for at least the next 10 years and therefore required no expeditionary forces.<sup>4</sup>

The army, navy, and air force each had very different ideas on what was the greatest threat to the empire in the new security environment. According to Clayton, "The differences arose from the very size of the Empire and its attendant commitments, and the absence of any clear foreign policy assessment of priorities in the decade."<sup>5</sup> They also arose from interservice competition over shrinking resources in the environment of the *Ten-Year Rule*. Each service touted a single-service strategy, with its own assets meeting the majority of Britain's security needs. The Royal Navy viewed Japan's increasing naval capability as the most serious threat to British hegemony; the Royal Air Force (RAF) believed that a significant "continental" air force would negate Britain's traditional natural protection (the English Channel); and the army considered Britain vulnerable through its "natural frontier," the Rhine.

The RAF, the newest service, faced the toughest challenge to its organizational integrity. It did not help the RAF that its primary strategic function, protecting Britain from an assault across the English Channel, was the vertical extension of a mission previously performed by the navy. There were many proposals to consolidate the RAF into the navy as the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) once the war had ended.<sup>6</sup> However, the RAF maintained its status as a separate service by shifting its mission statement to address the colonial arena.

British colonial administrators asserted that to maintain a given colony, certain "political requirements of 'law and order'" were necessary:

First of all, it must be possible for a British Officer, civil or military, to travel unmolested anywhere he may wish to go. . . . Secondly, the sanctity of the trade-routes through the hinterland must be respected. . . . The third rule is that if two [groups of natives] have to fight one another then they must manage to do so without interfering with the rights of third parties.<sup>7</sup>

These were the primary objectives of the occupying military force in Britain's colonial holdings. The RAF argued that these goals could be obtained most efficiently through the concept of air control.

Under air control, law-breaking tribes (defined as any native element that disrupted the maintenance of these three primary rules of law and order) would first be given an ultimatum. The government would clearly spell out what the miscreants had done wrong, what was expected of them in the future, and what restitution they were expected to pay. If, after a specified period of time, the lawbreakers did not satisfy the government's demands, the RAF would invoke an "inverted blockade" upon the guilty party or parties.

Shortly after the expiration of the ultimatum, RAF pilots would begin bombing the presumably empty villages of those charged with misbehavior.<sup>8</sup> The intended effect of the "blockade" was to bring economic pressure to bear on the targeted individuals by disrupting the daily routine necessary to survive. The bombings, interspersed with deliveries of propaganda literature, would slowly intensify until the recipients sued for peace on terms acceptable to the government. According to RAF policy, the stated political objective of air control was "to bring about a change in the temper or intention of the person or body of persons who are disturbing the peace. . . . In other words, we want a change of heart."<sup>9</sup> RAF leadership asserted that air control was less expensive in terms of money, casualties, and residual resentment than the traditional use of ground forces for punitive raids upon recalcitrant natives.

### **Somaliland**

It was in Somaliland in 1920 that the RAF first employed the concept of air control. Since 1899, the British colonial government had experienced difficulties there from the forces of Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Abdulla Hassan, disparagingly referred to as the "Mad Mullah." Sayyid Muhammad, a popular teacher and apostle of the "fiercely ascetic" Salihipa sect, was an outspoken critic of British imperialism. His frustration peaked, and he declared a *jihad* against British rule when the colonial administration permitted the establishment of a Roman Catholic school in the capital, Berbera.<sup>10</sup>

From 1903 to 1914, a series of half-hearted campaigns against the mullah was unsuccessful. He avoided pitched battles and drew imperial forces deep into the Somali desert.<sup>11</sup> The outbreak of World War I distracted British attention and for four years allowed the mullah and his followers a degree of the autonomy they sought. At

war's end, Sir Geoffrey Archer, the governor of Somaliland, claimed that the mullah's independence was a slap in the face to Britain and set a bad precedent for the rest of its empire.

In early 1919, Britain's War Office sent Maj Gen Sir Reginald Hoskins, commander in chief, East Africa, to Somalia to plan a campaign to resolve the situation once and for all. When the British government ruled that Hoskins's plan was too expensive, Royal Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard proposed a plan that relied on the RAF to attack the mullah's forces. Trenchard's plan combined aerial punishment with ground-based "mopping-up" attacks by camel-mounted levies.<sup>12</sup>

On 20 January 1920, the RAF delivered a payload of pamphlets, which outlined the British ultimatum, to the mullah's headquarters in Medishe.<sup>13</sup> The next day the bombing began in dramatic fashion when the mullah dressed himself in new robes and seated himself under a white canopy in defiance of British demands. The initial bombing attack reportedly killed the mullah's uncle (who was standing next to him under the canopy) and singed the mullah's own clothing.<sup>14</sup>

Convinced of the seriousness of British intentions, the mullah fled, leading British air and ground forces on a wild-geese chase across the Somali outback.<sup>15</sup> The campaign lasted three weeks and ultimately succeeded in dispersing the mullah's forces. Although immediate military objectives were not achieved—the mullah himself escaped to Ethiopia, where he died the following year—the RAF could claim that in a period of 21 days it had solved a problem that had eluded the army for 21 years.<sup>16</sup> The concept of air control was born.

## Mesopotamia

The next significant use of the RAF for colonial administration would come in Mesopotamia (Iraq). After the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I, Britain and France were awarded control of much of the territory of the collapsed empire. Included in Britain's mandate was Mesopotamia. Administered by the British India Office, Mesopotamia was garrisoned by an Anglo-Indian army of occupation that soon proved unsuitable for a task of such magnitude.

The Ottomans had relied on a system of arbitrating feuds between local tribes and granting significant autonomy to local notables in order to maintain order. Indirect rule had been the cornerstone of Ottoman policy. Among the nearly independent social groups were the "Marsh Arabs" who inhabited the southern banks of the Euphrates River. Likewise, the Kurds in northern Mesopotamia had long maintained virtual independence from central authority and did not take kindly to the British presence.<sup>17</sup>

The army of occupation was soon put to test extinguishing brush fires of resistance to British rule throughout the territory.<sup>18</sup> By early 1920, Mesopotamia was increasingly seen as unmanageable. In a report to Winston Churchill, then secretary of state for the colonies, General Staff professed itself unable to garrison Mesopotamia.<sup>19</sup> Encouraged by the recent success of air power in Somaliland, Churchill tasked Air Marshal Trenchard to provide a plan for the RAF's administration of Iraq.

Native resentment to British encroachment was on the rise during the spring of 1920. British policies causing alarm included the proposed equal education of women and a novel form of government intrusion—property taxes. Spurred on by a perceived British reluctance to fight for Mesopotamia, nationalists began an open, widespread

insurrection in May. Initially caught off guard by the revolt, the colonial government was slow to respond. All over the country the British were on the defensive. Army reinforcements were airlifted from India, and besieged outposts were kept supplied via airdrop.<sup>20</sup>

The revolt and its pacification were over by February 1921 and, contrary to initial Iraqi assumptions about British staying power, the rebellion hardened the British position against withdrawal from its mandate. For those who believed that the RAF should be given responsibility for the colony, the rebellion demonstrated the army's inability to protect Britain's interests and was evidence of the need for air control. At the Cairo Conference of March 1921, Churchill asserted that, due to the cost of maintaining a garrison, Britain had a choice between abandoning Iraq or implementing the RAF's proposal to maintain control.<sup>21</sup> The Military Committee of the Cairo Conference elected to pursue a policy of air control in Mesopotamia and, in an effort to placate Arab nationalism, named Emir Feisal ruler of Iraq (under British mandate).

On 22 October 1922, the Air Ministry officially took control of the country. Eight squadrons of bombers were distributed among three airfields, each of which had its own cantonment and defense perimeter guarded by levies under British officers. RAF colonial administrators stated that their purpose was "to assist [Feisal's] government in the task of bringing order and stability to [Iraq]."<sup>22</sup> RAF aircraft distributed propaganda leaflets among the tribes, transported political officers, and carried out blockades against the stubborn elements. Sir Percy Cox, the high commissioner in Baghdad, reported that by the end of 1922 on [at least] three occasions demonstrations by aircraft [have been sufficient to bring] tribal feuds to an end. On another occasion



planes destroyed a dam illegally built by a sheik to deprive his neighbors of water, and dropped bombs on a sheik and his followers who refused to pay taxes, held up travelers and attacked a police station.<sup>23</sup>

The primary foci of punitive operations remained the Kurds and the Marsh Arabs. Unwilling to give up hope of establishing a separate state, the Kurds, led by Sheikh Mahmud, carried out a guerrilla campaign in the North that would last throughout Britain's occupation of Iraq (a campaign which has continued, off and on, to this day).

The RAF also protected Iraqi tribesmen from raids by the rival Wahhabis across the southern frontier from what is now Saudi Arabia. The RAF implemented a successful campaign, combining air power with self-defense forces from local tribes, that kept relative peace until King Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia, crushed the Wahhabis in 1930.

By 1932, the last imperial police forces were removed from Iraq. During its tenure, the RAF had administered the Iraqi mandate at a fraction of the cost of maintaining control with ground forces. In 10 full years of air control operations, the RAF suffered only 14 killed in action and 84 wounded.<sup>24</sup>

## **Aden**

The use of the RAF to administer the Aden Protectorate, on the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, would prove to be Britain's longest and final application of air control. The protectorate consisted of the major port city of Aden and approximately 9,000 square miles of sparsely populated, unforgiving terrain. Originally established in 1839, the British had largely kept their operations confined to Aden.

Until well into the twentieth century, the British did little more than sign treaties with the various tribes in the interior to keep out other colonial powers<sup>25</sup> and to prevent the tribes from encroaching on Aden itself.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire heightened the ambitions of Imam Muhammad ibn Yahya, the religious leader of Yemen, to seek sovereign control over the entirety of his claimed domain, which included the Aden Protectorate.<sup>26</sup> Imam Yahya's interpretation of the "bounds" of his realm was incomprehensible to the British. The colonial government conceded the imam's right to "territories recently Turkish." However, it demanded that he abide by boundaries agreed to with the Ottomans in 1904 and that he respect treaties between the British and the tribes within the protectorate. In February 1926, a meeting took place in the Yemeni capital of Sana between the imam himself and British negotiator Sir Gilbert Clayton. Both sides agreed to a status quo in which each believed he had achieved the other's capitulation.<sup>27</sup> The Imam Yahya continued working to establish imamate authority over "al-Yemen." The stage was set for the introduction of the RAF into Aden.

Again, Britain's primary consideration in resorting to air control of a colony would be monetary. The army estimated that it would cost £1 million annually and require a division of infantry to throw the imam's forces back to the line that the British considered the frontier between Yemen and Aden.<sup>28</sup> In early 1928, the RAF stationed a squadron of bombers at Aden and took over administration of the protectorate from the army. An ultimatum was delivered to Imam Yahya. He was warned that any further intrusion into the protectorate would be cause for air raids against his cities.

On 5 April 1928, Yemeni raiders crossed the frontier and looted a village near Aden. Within two hours, RAF bombers were dispatched to bomb the southern Yemeni town of Taiz. Soon after, another bomber flew to the capital, Sana, for demonstrative purposes. The imam's morale was shaken enough for him to order all "occupied" territory evacuated.<sup>29</sup> Although Yemen ended its overt penetrations into the protectorate, the imam (and his son Ahmed) would continue to denounce foreign domination for the rest of Britain's colonial tenure in Aden.

Having put a stop to the protectorate's external source of unrest, the RAF turned to establishing internal tranquillity. In Aden, British political officers would make significant use of the airplane to move about the territory in order to negotiate cease-fires between feuding tribes and to deliver other political "goods."<sup>30</sup> In the 1930s, William Harold Ingrams managed to negotiate a series of treaties known as "Ingrams' Peace" that involved the cooperation of over 1,300 tribal leaders.<sup>31</sup> In January 1954, the work done by political officers resulted in the creation of a Federation of the Western Protectorate composed of the governor of Aden and tribal rulers.<sup>32</sup> The RAF continued to use air control to maintain order within the protectorate as Britain progressively relinquished control of the colony and granted it independence in 1966.<sup>33</sup>

As Britain withdrew from its empire, the use of air control dwindled. However, due to its perceived success throughout the Middle East 70 years ago, air control remains a model for the application of air power in "little wars," not only for the British but for others as well.<sup>34</sup> It is significant to note that the domestic and geostrategic environment facing the United States today parallels that which Great Britain faced in the post-World War I era when the concept of air control was born.

## The Posture of American Air Power

Containment of communism and deterrence of Soviet aggression are no longer the primary tenets of our national security strategy. Proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; drug trafficking; democratization; and international political, military, and economic interdependence are the forces shaping the current US security posture.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, increasing foreign trade imbalances and a towering domestic budget deficit are now seen as the primary threats to US national interests. For some policymakers, cutting the defense budget to produce a "peace dividend" is the primary tool to deal with current American economic woes.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the American military establishment is undergoing a painful and important reevaluation of its force structure and doctrine and the individual services are locked in battle to protect their respective roles in various Department of Defense (DOD) missions.<sup>37</sup>

In response to the changes of the late 1980s, the US Air Force issued a "new" philosophy of operations termed *global reach—global power*.<sup>38</sup> This new stance entails continental US (CONUS)-based aircraft reacting to flashpoints as they occur throughout the world (global reach) with concentrated firepower (global power). Global reach—global power combines traditional views about the employment of air power with the political and economic realities of operating with less forward presence. This posture is an attempt to apply cold-war weapon systems and tactics to a new security environment where threats are more diffuse, and less tangible and must be managed with a shrinking infrastructure.

The USAF's first chance to employ global reach—global power was the deployment of American assets to the Middle East during Operation Desert Shield.

Once the buildup was complete, coalition forces shifted to traditional constructs (envisioned for use against Soviet armed forces) to plan and fight the battles of Operation Desert Storm. However, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the major "lesson learned" by air strategists was that global reach—global power was highly effective.<sup>39</sup> The American experience with air power during Operation Desert Storm not only validated the assertions of global reach—global power, it further entrenched three deep-seated beliefs that drive current air power application.

First, since the 1940s, American air power strategists have focused on the airplane's ability to avoid geographic and military obstacles and deliver ordnance onto a target. The legacy of Giulio Douhet and William ("Billy") Mitchell has led to a "tunnel vision" that focuses solely on the "shooter" aspect of the USAF's mission.<sup>40</sup> The stunning success of high-technology weaponry during Operation Desert Storm has without a doubt helped to further ingrain this mode of thinking.

Second, many air power advocates contend that the results of the air campaign in Operation Desert Storm established the primacy of air power in any future military conflict. Lt Col Price Bingham even went so far as to state that perhaps the most important lesson the US military could learn from Desert Storm is that it needs to change its doctrine to recognize the reality that air power can dominate modern conventional war. . . . Surface forces are still very important, but campaign success now depends on superiority in the air more than it does on surface superiority.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, air power played a major role during the Gulf War; however, the remarkable success of air power may have had more to do with the unique characteristics of the conflict than the "maturation" of air power doctrine. Iraq and

Kuwait are desert countries where air power is more decisive against enemy forces due to lack of adequate cover. Additionally, the static nature of Iraqi operations allowed coalition air forces to suppress any credible air defense threat and to continually pound stationary enemy targets.

Third, there exists a widespread belief that the use of air power to solve military conflicts is more "economical" than the use of ground forces, both in terms of dollars spent and casualties suffered. Desert Storm contributed to this perception for several reasons: America's media picture of the war was dominated by the air campaign; the US military suffered a remarkably low rate of casualties; and the amount of collateral damage to Iraqi civilians was kept relatively low. The notion that air power is cheaper and neater than the use of ground forces has much political utility in light of the current domestic economic situation and the traditional American aversion to acknowledging the "human cost" of military operations.

Given the current intellectual atmosphere, a doctrine similar to air control appeals to American air power advocates. Such a doctrine allows the Air Force to maintain traditional assumptions about the employment of air assets and fits into the current emphasis on accomplishing military missions at minimal cost.

## **Air Control for Bosnia?**

In the spring of 1993, the Clinton administration first put forth a strategy for using air strikes to halt the fighting in the former Yugoslavian republics. The strategy itself, the reasons for relying on it, and its intended military goals all mirror Britain's use of air control in its colonies.

First and foremost among the administration's considerations was President Bill Clinton's insistence that US ground troops should not to be introduced into the theater. The president and his advisors operated under the assumption that limiting US involvement to the use of air power would reduce American dollars spent and lives lost. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Merrill A. McPeak assured the Clinton administration that air operations over Bosnia posed "virtually no risk" to the aircrews involved.<sup>42</sup> In Bosnia, "economy" would be a factor in the reliance on air power.

The intended military goal of the Clinton administration's proposal was to "halt Serbian aggression and freeze its military gains by a cease-fire."<sup>43</sup> This goal was stated before President Clinton articulated a formal US policy on the conflict or decided upon overall objectives for military action (both of which his administration has yet to do). The idea that air power can be relied upon to provide a "quick fix" reflects the influence of the "lessons" of the Desert Storm air campaign. Furthermore, such a limited military goal indicates a desire for immediate stability rather than a long-term solution to the problem similar to Britain's attitude about tranquility in the colonies.

The plan itself involved using Air Force and Navy fighters deployed to air bases in Italy and on aircraft carriers in the Adriatic Sea to launch sorties against Bosnian Serb forces.<sup>44</sup> Targets included artillery positions and storage areas as well as key

bridges and rail junctions reportedly used to resupply forces in Bosnia from Serbia. Since these strikes had little chance of destroying all of the Serbian artillery positions and were not going to be coordinated with any ground operations, they would have amounted to little more than punitive attacks. *The concept of using aircraft based on the periphery of an isolated conflict to bring peace by meting out punishment when and where it is deserved is the essence of air control.*

The Clinton proposal to use air strikes in Bosnia may not mirror all the characteristics of classic air control as employed by Britain in its colonies; however, what is important is that the underlying assumptions about the use of air power and the desired results are the same. The long-term effectiveness of air control in both situations is likely to be the same as well.

### **The Nature of Low-Intensity Conflict and the Effectiveness of Air Control**

The resistance that an initial occupying colonial force faced and the current civil war in the former Yugoslavian republics, although very different, are both forms of LIC.<sup>45</sup>

The most important characteristic of LIC, which is generally overlooked by policymakers and military planners, is that *the conflict cannot be resolved solely with military power.* As Sam Sarkesian asserts,

The center of gravity of such conflicts is not on the battlefield per se, but in the political-social system of the indigenous state. Thus, the main battle lines are political and psychological rather than between opposing armed units.<sup>46</sup>



The concept of air control as conceived and employed by the British (and mirrored by the Clinton administration) ignores this basic tenet of LIC.

In each case where Britain employed air control, overwhelming firepower did nothing more than temporarily suppress the overt manifestations of some underlying sociopolitical conflict. However, since this limited goal was sufficient for Britain's colonial needs, air control was heralded as a broad success. In 1920 Somalia, the RAF did not succeed in resolving Britain's dispute with Sayyid Muhammad; it merely drove him into a neighboring country. The resentment of British intrusion into the lives of Somali natives, which Sayyid Muhammad had embodied, remained. In Iraq, the colonial government could not comprehend that what they considered as just a matter of "law and order" involved significant political issues for native tribes. In Aden, discontent sown by the Imam Yahya and his successor-son Imam Ahmed, could be subdued by RAF bombers, but it merely lay dormant until the territory gained independence and became the source of a strong nationalist movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Peter Slugett, a British historian of Iraq, summed up the posture that air control eventuated:

The most serious long-term consequence of the ready availability of air control was that it developed into a substitute for administration. . . . *The speed and simplicity of air attack was preferred to the more time-consuming and painstaking investigation of grievances and disputes.* (Emphasis added)<sup>47</sup>

This same posture threatens to subsume the American application of air power, especially with respect to the complex situations that are indicative of the low-intensity environment.

Air strikes in Bosnia may indeed bring the situation on the ground to a standstill, but what will this really accomplish? Like the application of air control in the British colonies, air power may bring about an immediate "peace" on *our* terms. This would allow American policymakers to declare that they had somehow contributed to stability in the area. This "solution" would also satisfy American legislators if it could be accomplished with little cost in American dollars and lives. However, past efforts to employ offensive air operations, within the low-intensity environment, to provide a temporary cessation of the conflict so that long-term efforts could be made to win the "hearts and minds of the people" have proven counterproductive.<sup>48</sup> The use of military firepower to quell disturbances associated with low-intensity threats consistently generates a political backlash that does nothing but further inflame the conflict.<sup>49</sup>

The adoption of an air control strategy in Bosnia would be a mistake because foreign military intervention aimed at changing the behavior of "unruly natives" would at best impose a short break in the fighting and would ultimately aggravate the situation by generating resentment on all sides. The nature of the conflict in Bosnia is such that it cannot be solved in a few days, weeks, or even months. It will take years to heal the sociopolitical ills that exist in the Balkans.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, resolution of this conflict will prove impossible without the use of ground forces.<sup>51</sup>

The lesson to be learned from the British experience of air control is not that it is a model for the application of air power in the modern low-intensity arena, but quite the opposite—*any application of military power in LIC that ignores the underlying sociopolitical nature of the conflict is, in the long run, a waste of time, lives, and*

*resources.* Low-intensity conflict, by its very nature, demands patience and durability, neither of which is characteristic of the concept of air control.

## Notes

1. Anthony Clayton, *The British Empire as a Superpower, 1919-1939* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 1.
2. Ibid., 11.
3. Ibid., 11-12.
4. Ibid., 18.
5. Ibid.
6. See Malcolm Smith, *British Air Strategy between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 15-19, 22-28.
7. Air-Commodore C. F. A. Portal, "Air Force Co-operation in Policing the Empire," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, May 1937, 348.
8. In practice, RAF pilots avoided bombing inhabitants. Government ultimatums spelled out exactly where and when bombing would occur and encouraged evacuation. Ibid., 353.
9. Ibid., 350.
10. Lawrence James, *Imperial Rearguard: Wars of Empire, 1919-1985* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988), 164-65.
11. Ibid., 165.
12. Philip Anthony Towle, *Pilots and Rebels: The Use of Aircraft in Unconventional Warfare, 1918-1988* (London: Brassey's, Defence Publishers, 1989), 12.
13. James, 166.
14. Randal Gray, "Bombing the Mad Mullah—1920," *RUSI: Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*, 4 December 1980, 43.
15. See Gray for a detailed account of the campaign. Ibid., 41-47.
16. Smith, 28.
17. Indifference turned to enmity when Britain played a key role in rejecting the promise of an independent Kurdistan following World War I.
18. See James, 71-73.
19. Towle, 13.
20. See James, 73-75.
21. Towle, 15.
22. James, 77.
23. Towle, 17.
24. Ibid., 19.

25. The Ottomans had colonial interests in and around Aden until their withdrawal at the end of World War I.

26. See William Harold Ingrams, *The Yemen: Imams, Rulers, & Revolutions* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1964), 64.

27. Ibid., 65-67.

28. Towle, 28.

29. Ingrams, 67.

30. Towle, 29-31.

31. Ingrams, 80.

32. Ibid., 86.

33. For details of various operations, see Towle, 32-34.

34. Sources on the use of British air control as an example of the "successful" employment of air power in LIC include the following: Capt George C. Morris, "The Other Side of the COIN: Low-Technology Aircraft and Little Wars," *Airpower Journal* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 60; Lt Col David J. Dean, *Air power in Small Wars: The British Air Control Experience* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, April 1985); Col Kenneth J. Alnwick, "Perspectives on Air Power at the Low End of the Conflict Spectrum," *Air University Review* 35, no. 3 (March-April 1984): 18-19; and Roger A. Beaumont, "A New Lease on Empire: Air Policing, 1919-1939," *Aerospace Historian*, June 1979, 84-90.

35. *National Military Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, January 1992), 1.

36. Rick Maze, "Even More Defense Cuts Urged," *Air Force Times*, 1 March 1993, 3.

37. See Neff Hudson, "Air Force Would Lose `Copters Under Plan," *Air Force Times*, 1 February 1993, 10; Julie Bird, "Air Force Would Share Air Defense Mission," *Air Force Times*, 1 March 1993, 6.

38. Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice, *The Air Force and U.S. National Security: Global Reach—Global Power*, white paper (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Air Force, June 1990).

39. For example see Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice, "Air Power in the New Security Environment," in Richard H. Schultz, Jr., and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., eds., *The Future of Air Power in the Aftermath of the Gulf War* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, July 1992), 11.

40. See Lt Col Barry D. Watts, *The Foundations of U.S. Air Doctrine: The Problem of Friction in War* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, December 1984). For an example of this type of bias, see Col John A. Warden III, *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988).

41. Lt Col Price T. Bingham, "Air Power in Desert Storm and the Need for Doctrinal Change," *Airpower Journal* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 33.
42. Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. Military Split on Using Air Power Against the Serbs," *New York Times*, 29 April 1993, A1.
43. White House "officials" quoted in Elaine Sciolino, "Christopher Explains Conditions for Use of U.S. Force in Bosnia," *New York Times*, 28 April 1993, A10.
44. See William Matthews, "U.S. Plans for Peacekeeping, War in Bosnia," *Air Force Times*, 17 May 1993, 14-16.
45. Air Force Pamphlet (AFP) 3-20 defines LIC as "Political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional [forms of] war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states." See Field Manual (FM) 100-20/AFP 3-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, December 1990, 1-1.
46. Dr Sam C. Sarkesian, "Low-Intensity Conflict: Concepts, Principles, and Policy Guidelines," in *Low-Intensity Conflict and Modern Technology*, ed. Lt Col David J. Dean (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1986), 15.
47. Peter Slugett, *Britain in Iraq, 1914-1932* (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), 269.
48. Capt David Willard Parsons, "Toward the Proper Application of Air Power in Low-Intensity Conflict" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 1993), 46-59.
49. Ibid.
50. See Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992).
51. For example see John J. Mearshimer and Robert A. Pape, "The Answer: A Partition Plan for Bosnia," *The New Republic*, 14 June 1993, 22-28.

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